

The Freedom

“Carved (*harut*) on the stones”

Do not pronounce it “carved” (*harut*), but rather “freedom” (*herut*).

To show that they are freed from the angel of death.

(*Midrash Shmot Raba*, 41)

These words need to be clarified. Because how is the matter of reception of the Torah related to one’s freedom from death? Furthermore, once they have attained an eternal body that cannot die, through the reception of the Torah, how did they lose it again, can the eternal become absent?

Freedom of Will

In order to understand the sublime concept - “freedom from the angel of death”, we must first understand the concept, as it is normally understood by all mankind.

It is a general view that freedom is deemed a natural law, which applies to all that is alive. Thus we can see that animals that fall into captivity die when their freedom is robbed. And it is a true testimony that providence does not accept the enslavement of any creature. It is not for no good reason that humanity has struggled for the past several hundred years, before it has attained a certain amount of freedom for the individual.

Yet the concept, expressed in that word - “freedom” - remains unclear. And if we delve into the heart of that word, there will be almost nothing left. For before you seek one’s freedom, you must assume that any individual, in and of itself, has that quality, called freedom, meaning that he can act according to his own free choice.

Pleasure and Pain

However, when we examine the acts of an individual we shall find them compulsory. He is compelled to do them and has no freedom of choice. In a sense, he is like a stew, cooking on a stove; it has no choice but to cook. Providence has harnessed life with two chains: pleasure and pain.

The living creatures have no freedom of choice, choosing pain or rejecting pleasure, and the only advantage man has over animals is that he can aim at a remote target. That is he can agree to a certain amount of current pain, out of choice of future benefit or pleasure, to be attained after some time.

But in fact there is no more than a seemingly commercial calculation here. Meaning that the future benefit or pleasure, seems greater than the current pain or agony that they have agreed to take on presently. There is only a matter of deduction here, that the pain is deducted from the aspired pleasure, and there remains some extra.

Thus only pleasure is extended. And so it sometimes happens, that one is tormented, because one did not find the pleasure one attained, to be the surplus one had hoped for, compared to the agony one suffered, and therefore one is in deficit. It is all done as merchants do.

And when all is said and done, there is no difference here between man and animal. And if that is the case, there is no free choice whatsoever, but a pulling force, attracting toward any bypassing pleasure, and rejecting from painful circumstances. And providence leads them to every place it chooses by means of these two forces, without asking their opinion in the matter.

Even the determination of the type of pleasure and the benefit, are entirely out of one's own free choice, but rather follow the desire of others. For example: I sit, I dress, I speak, I eat. I do all these not because I want to sit that way, or talk that way, or dress that way or eat that way. I do it because others want me to sit, dress, talk, and eat that way. It is in accordance with the desires of society, not my own free will.

Furthermore, in most cases, I do these things against my will. For I would feel a lot more comfortable behaving simply, not carrying any burden. But I am chained in every movement to the flavors and manners of others, which make up the society.

So you tell me, where is my freedom of choice? On the other hand, if we assume that the will has no freedom, then we are all like machines, operating and creating through external forces, which make it act the way it does. That means that we are all incarcerated in the prison of providence, which, using these two chains - pleasure and pain - pushes and pulls us to its will, to where it sees fit.

It turns out that there seems to be no such thing as selfishness in the world, since no one here is free and stands on his own two feet. I am not the owner of the act, and I am not the performer because I want to perform, but I am performed upon, in a compulsory manner, without consideration of my own opinion. Therefore reward and punishment become extinct.

And it is quite odd not only for the orthodox, who believe in His providence, and can rely on Him and trust that He aims only for the best in every act. It is even stranger for those who believe in nature, since according to the above, we are all incarcerated by the chains of blind nature, with no awareness or accountability. And we, the chosen species, one of mind and knowledge, have become a toy in the hands of blind nature, leading us astray, and who knows where?

The Law of Causality

It is worthwhile taking some time to grasp such an important thing, meaning how we exist in the world in terms of "selfishness", that each and every one of us regards himself as a unique being, acting on its own, independent of external, alien and unknown forces. And how is this being - of selfishness - revealed before us?

It is a fact that there is a general connection among all the items of reality that abide by the law of causality, by way of cause and effect. And as the whole, so is each and every item for itself. Meaning each and every creature in the world, from the four types - still, vegetative, animate and speaking, abides by the law of causality by way of cause and effect.

And furthermore, each particular form of a particular behavior, that a creature holds to while in this world, is pushed by ancient causes, compelling it take on that specific change of behavior and no other. And it is apparent to all who examine the ways of nature, from a pure scientific point of view, without a shred of biasness. Indeed we must analyze it so as to allow ourselves to examine it from all sides.

Four Factors

Bear in mind, that every emergence, occurring in the beings of the world, must be understood not as existence that comes out of absence, but as existence that comes out of existence, meaning from an actual entity that has been stripped of its former form to take on its current one.

Therefore we must understand, that in every emergence in the world there are four factors, that from the four of them together, arises that emergence. They are:

A. The bed.

- B. The conduct of cause and effect, related to the bed's own attribute, which remain unchanged.
- C. The internal cause and effect, that change as a result of contact with alien forces.
- D. The cause and effect of alien forces, acting on it from the outside.

And I will clarify them one by one:

The First Factor: the Bed, the First Matter

A. The “bed”, meaning the first matter, related to that being. For “there is nothing new under the sun”, and any event that will occur in our world, is not existence from absence, but rather existence from existence. It is an entity that has stripped off its former shape, and taken on another, different from the first, and that entity is regarded the “bed”. In it lies the strength destined to be revealed and determined at the end of the formation of that emergence. Therefore it is certainly regarded as its primary cause.

The Second Factor: the Cause and Effect that Stem from Itself

B. It is a conduct of cause and effect, that is related to the bed's own attribute, which does not change. Take, for example, a stalk of wheat that rots in the ground, as a result of which many stalks of wheat grow. Thus, that rotten phase is deemed the “bed”. Meaning that the essence of the wheat has stripped off its former shape, which is the shape of wheat, and has taken on the shape of rotten wheat, which is the seed, that we call - “bed”, which is now stripped of any shape. Now, after rotting in the ground it has become worthy of dressing in another shape, that is the shape of many stalks of wheat, destined to grow from that bed, which is the seed.

And it is known to all, that this bed is destined to become neither cereal, nor oats, but it can only be compared to its former shape, which has now been stripped off it, being the single stalk of wheat. And although it changes to a certain degree, both in quality and quantity, for in the former shape there was just one stalk, and now there are ten or twenty stalks, and in taste and appearance too, but the essence of the shape of the wheat remains unchanged.

Thus there is a conduct of cause and effect, ascribed to the bed's own attribute, which never changes, that cereal will never emerge from wheat, as we’ve said. That is called the second factor.

The Third Factor: the Inner Cause and Effect

C. It is the conduct of the inner cause and effect of the bed that change upon encountering the alien forces of its environment. Meaning, that we find that from one stalk of wheat, which rots in the ground, emerge many stalks, sometimes larger and better than it was prior to sowing.

Therefore, there must be additional factors involved here, that have collaborated with the concealed force from the environment, meaning the “bed”. And because of that, the additions in quality and quantity, that were absent from the previous form of wheat, have now become apparent. Those are the minerals and the materials in the ground, the rain and the sun. All these operate on it by allocating from their forces and joining in with the force in the bed itself, that through cause and effect, have produced the multiplication of quantity and quality in that emergence.

We must understand that this third factor joins in with the internality of the bed, because the hidden force in the bed controls them. That at long last these changes all

belong to the wheat and to no other plant. Therefore we determine them as internal factors. However, they differ from the unchanging second factor in every aspect, whereas the third factor changes in both quality and quantity.

The Fourth Factor: Cause and Effect Through Alien Forces

B. It is a conduct of cause and effect through alien factors that act upon it from outside. Meaning that they do not have a direct relation to the wheat, such as minerals, or rain or the sun, but factors that are alien to it, such as nearby plants, or external events such as hail, wind etc.

And you find that four factors combine to the wheat throughout its growth. And each particular situation the wheat is subject to during that time, becomes conditioned on the four of them. That the quality and quantity of each state is determined by them. And as we've portrayed in the wheat, so is the rule in every emergence in the world, even in thoughts and ideas.

If, for example, we picture to ourselves some conceptual state in a certain individual, such as a state of a person being religious, or non religious, or an extreme orthodox, or not so extreme, or intermediate - we will understand that that state is determined in man by the above four factors.

Hereditary Possessions

The first factor is the bed, which is its first substance. For man is created existence from existence, meaning from the minds of its progenitors. It turns out, therefore, that to a certain extent, it is like copying from book to book, meaning that almost all the matters that were accepted and attained in the forefathers are copied in it as well.

But the difference is that it is in an abstract form. Much like the sowed wheat, which is deemed a seed until it has rotted and been stripped of its former shape. So is the case with the drop of semen, from which man is born, there is nothing in it of its forefathers' shapes, but abstract force.

For the same ideas that were concepts in his forefathers, have turned into mere tendencies in him, called instincts or habits, even without knowing why he does what he does. For they are indeed concealed forces that he has inherited from his ancestors, in a way that not only the material possessions come to us through inheritance from our ancestors, but the spiritual possessions and all the concepts that our fathers engaged in also come to us by inheritance from generation to generation.

And from here surface various tendencies that we find in people, such as: a tendency to believe, or to criticize, a tendency to settle for material life, or a desire for ideals, despising a life of no demand, stingy, consenting, insolent, or shy.

For all these pictures, that appear in people, are not their own property, that they've acquired, but mere inheritance that had been given to them by their ancestors. It is known, that in a man's mind there is a special place, where these tendencies reside. It is called the "medulla oblongata" (the elongated brain), or the subconscious, and all the tendencies are found there.

But because the concepts of our ancestors, acquired through their experiences, have become mere tendencies in us, they are regarded the same as the sowed wheat, that had taken off its former shape and remained bare, with but potential forces, deemed to take on new forms. That in our matter these tendencies are deemed to take on the forms of ideas, which are therefore considered the first substance, and this is the primary factor, called "bed". In it reside all the forces of the unique tendencies he has inherited from his progenitors, which are defined as ancestral heritage.

Bear in mind, that some of these tendencies come in a negative form, meaning the

opposite of the ones that were in his ancestors. That is why they said: “All that is concealed in the heart of the father becomes evident in the son”.

The reason for that is that the “bed” takes off its former shape in order to take on a new one. Therefore it is close to deny the shapes of the concepts of its ancestors, as the wheat that rots in the ground strips itself of the shape that existed in the wheat. However, it still depends on the other three factors.

The Influence of the Environment

The second factor is a conduct of direct cause and effect, related to the bed’s own attribute, which does not change. Meaning, as we’ve clarified with the wheat that rots in the ground, that the environment in which the bed rests, such as soil, minerals and rain, the air and the sun, act upon sowing, as we’ve said, in a long chain of cause and effect, through a long and gradual process, step by step, until it ripens.

And the bed has retaken its former shape, meaning the shape of wheat, but with a different quality and quantity. And their general aspect remains completely unchanged, that no cereal or oats will grow from it. They change in their particular aspect in quantity - that from one stalk, come out a dozen or two dozen stalks, and in quality - which are better or worse than the former shape of the wheat.

It is the same here, that man, as a “bed”, is placed in the environment, meaning in society. And he is compelled to be influenced by it, as the wheat from its environment, for the bed is but a raw form. Thus, out of the to and fro contact with his surrounding and the environment, he is impressed by them through a gradual process or a chain of situations, one by one, as cause and effect.

At that time, the tendencies included in his bed take the form of concepts. If, for example, one inherits from his ancestors a tendency to stinginess, when he grows he builds for himself concepts and ideas, that conclude decisively that it is good to be stingy. Thus, although his father was generous, he can inherit from him the negative tendency, that of stinginess, for the absence is just as inheritance as the presence.

Or if one inherits from his ancestors a tendency to be open minded. He builds for himself ideas and draws from them conclusions that it is good to be open minded. But where does one find those sentences and reasons? One takes them from his environment, unknowingly, for they implant their opinions and flavors in him in a process of gradual cause and effect.

And it is done so that man regards them as his own, that he has acquired them through free thought. Here too, just as with the wheat, there is one unchanging part of the bed and that is that the inherited tendencies remain just as they were in his forefathers. That is the second factor.

Habit Turns to Second Nature

The third factor is a conduct of direct cause and effect, which the bed goes through and is changed by them. For because the inherited tendencies in man have turned, because of the environment, to concepts, they are found to work in directions that these concepts define. For example, a man of stingy nature, that through society this tendency has turned into a concept, and he can now understand stinginess through some reasonable definition.

Let us assume that he defends himself through that behavior so that he will not need others. It turns out that he has attained a scale for stinginess, that for some time, when that fear is absent, he will be able let go of that trait. It turns out that he has changed for the better from the original tendency he had inherited from his forefathers. And sometimes one manages to uproot completely a bad tendency. It is

done by habit, which has the ability to become second nature.

In that the strength of man is greater than that of a plant. For the wheat cannot change but in its private part, whereas man has the ability to change through the power of environmental cause and effect, even in the general parts, that is to entirely uproot a tendency and turn to its opposite.

External Factors

The fourth factor is a conduct of cause and effect that affects the bed, by forces that are completely alien to it, and operate on it from the outside. Meaning that these forces are not related to the bed's growth conduct, to act directly on it, but rather operate indirectly. For example, monetary issues, everyday burdens, or the winds etc, that in and of themselves have a complete, slow and gradual order of situations by way of "cause and effect", which change man's concepts for better or for worse.

Thus, I have set up the four natural factors that each of our thoughts and ideas that come to our minds are but their products. And should one sit and meditate the whole day long, he'll not be able to add or otherwise alter what those four factors give him. Any addition he can add is in the quantity: whether a great mind or a small one, but in the quality he cannot add one bit. For they determine the character and shape of the idea and the conclusion compellingly, without asking our opinion. Thus we are at the hands of these four factors, as clay in the hands of a potter.

Free Choice

However, when we examine these four factors, we find that although our strength is not enough to face the first factor, which is the "bed", we still have the ability and the free choice to defend ourselves against the other three factors, by which the bed changes in its individual parts. Sometimes it changes in its general part as well, through habit, which endows it with a second nature.

The Environment as a Factor

That protection means that we can always supplement in the matter of choosing our environment, which are the friends, the books, the teachers and so on. Like a person who has inherited from his father a few stalks of wheat, that he can grow from this small amount dozens of stalks through his choice of the environment for his "bed", which is fertile soil, with all the necessary minerals and raw materials that nourish the wheat abundantly.

There is also the matter of the labour at improving the environmental conditions to fit the needs of the plant and the growth, for the wise will do well to choose the best conditions and will find blessing in his work, and the fool will take from whatever comes before him, and will thus turn the sowing to a curse rather than to a blessing.

Thus, all its praise and spirit depends upon the choice of the environment in which to sow the wheat. But once it has been sowed in the selected location, its absolute shape is determined according to the measure that the environment is capable of providing.

So is the case with our topic, for it is true that the will has no freedom, but is impressed by the above four factors. And one is compelled to think and examine as they suggest, denied of any strength of scrutiny or change, as the wheat in its environment.

However, there is freedom for the will to initially choose such an environment as books and such guides - that bestow upon him good concepts. And if one does not do that, but is willing to come inside just any environment and read any book that

falls into his hands, he is bound to fall into a bad environment, or waste his time on worthless books, which are abundant and easier to come by, which compel him to foul conceptions, that make him sin and condemn. **He will certainly be punished, not because of his evil thoughts and deeds, which he has no choice of, but because he did not choose the good environment, for as we have seen, in that there is definitely a choice.**

Therefore, he who strives to continuously choose a better environment is worthy of praise and reward. But here too, not because of his good deeds or thoughts, which come to him without his choice, but because of his effort to acquire a good environment, which brings him these good thoughts and deeds. As Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Prehya said: “Make a rabbi for yourself and buy yourself a friend”.

The Must in Choosing a Good Environment

Hence you can understand the words of Rabbi Yosi Ben Kisma (Avot 86), who, in reply to an offer to live in another person’s town and be paid for it thousands of gold coins, replied: “Even if you give me all the gold and silver and jewels in the world, I will live only in a place of Torah”. These words seem too sublime for our simple mind to grasp, for how can it be that he has given up thousands of gold coins for such a small thing, as living in a place where there are no disciples of Torah, whereas he himself was a great wise who needed to learn from no one? Indeed a great mystery.

But as we’ve seen, it is a simple thing that should be observed by each and every one of us. For although everyone has “his own bed”, the forces do not reveal openly but through the environment one is in, much like the wheat sowed in the ground, whose forces do not become apparent, but through its environment, which is the soil, the rain and the light of the sun.

Thus, Rabbi Yosi Ben Kisma correctly assumed that if he were to leave the good environment he had chosen and fall into a harmful environment, meaning a place with no disciples of Torah, not only would his former concepts be compromised, but all the other forces, hidden in his bed, that he had not yet revealed in action, would remain concealed. That is because they would not be subject to the right environment that would activate them.

And as we’ve clarified above, that **only in the matter of man’s choice of environment, his reign over himself is measured, and for that he is worthy of either praise or punishment.** Therefore one must not wonder at a wise man such as Rabbi Yosi Ben Kisma for choosing the good and declining the bad and for not been tempted into material and corporeal things, as he deduces there: “when one dies one does not take with him silver or gold, or jewels, but only good deeds and Torah”. And so our sages warned: “Make a rabbi for yourself and buy yourself a friend”, as well as the choice of books, as we’ve mentioned. For in that alone can one be rebuked or praised, meaning in his choice of environment. But once he’s chosen that environment, he’s at its hands as clay in the hands of the potter.

The Control of the Mind over the Body

Some external contemporary wise men, after having meditated over the above matter, and having seen how man’s mind is but a fruit that grows out of the events of life, came to a conclusion that the mind has no control over the body, but the events of life alone, imprinted in the physical tendons of the brain control and activate man. And a man’s mind is like a mirror that takes the shapes before it, that although the

mirror is the carrier of these shapes, it cannot activate or move the shapes reflected in it.

So is the mind. Although the events of life, in all their cause and effect factors, are seen and recognized by the mind, it is utterly incapable of controlling the body, to bring it into motion, meaning to bring it closer to the good or farther from the bad, because the spiritual and the physical are completely remote from one another. And there cannot be any intermediary tool between them to enable the mind to activate and operate on the corporeal body, as we've discussed in length.

But where they are smart, they also disrupt. For man's imagination serves him no less than the microscope serves the eye, without which he cannot see any harmful thing because of its small size. But once he has seen the harmful factor through the microscope, man distances himself from the noxious factor.

It turns out, that it is the microscope that brings man to action, to distance himself from the harmful factor, and not the sense, for the sense did not detect the noxious factor. And to that extent the mind fully controls man's body to distance it from bad, and bring it near the good. Meaning that in all those places where the attribute of the body fails to recognize the factor as beneficial or as harmful, it needs the wit of the mind.

Furthermore, since man knows his mind, which is a true conclusion from the experiences of life, **therefore he can take mind and knowledge from a trusted person, and accept it as law, although the events of his life have not yet revealed these conceptions to him.** It is like a person who asks the advice of a doctor and obeys him even though he understands nothing with his own mind. Thus one uses the mind of others as much as one uses one's own.

As we've clarified above, there are two ways for providence to make sure that man comes to that good and resolute goal. They are:

- A. The path of agony.
- B. The path of Torah.

All the clarity in the path of the Torah stems from that. For these clear conceptions that were revealed and recognized after a long chain of events in the lives of the prophets and other men of God, there comes a man who fully utilizes them, and benefits from them as though these concepts came from the events of his own life. Thus you see that one is relieved of all the ordeals one must experience before he can develop that clear mind by himself. Thus one saves both time and pain.

It can be compared to a sick man who will not obey the doctor's orders, before he understands by himself how that advice would cure him, and therefore begins to study medicine. He could die of his illness before he learns the wisdom of medicine.

So is the path of agony, vs. the path of Torah. For he who does not believe the concepts that the Torah and prophecy advise him to adopt without self-understanding, must come to these conceptions by himself. Meaning, only through one's following the chain of cause and effect from the events of life, which are very hastening experiences, capable of developing the sense of recognition of evil in them, as we've seen, without one's choice, but because one labors in acquiring a good environment that leads to these good thoughts and acts.

The Freedom of the Individual

Now we have come to a thorough understanding of the freedom of the individual. However, that relates only to the first factor, being the "bed", which is the first

substance of every man, meaning all the characteristics that we inherit from our forefathers, in which we all differ from one another.

For even when thousands of people share the same environment, in such a way that the other three factors act equally upon them, you will still not find two people who will share the same attribute. That is because each of them has his/her own unique bed. It is like the bed of the wheat, that although it changes a great deal by the power of the three remaining factors, it still retains the preliminary shape of the wheat and will never take on another form.

The General Shape of the Progenitor is Never Lost

So it is, that each “bed” that had taken off the preliminary shape of the progenitor and had taken on a new shape as a result of the three factors that were added to it, and as a result of that has changed substantially, still retains the general shape of the progenitor and will never adopt the shape of another person who resembles him, just as the oat will never resemble the wheat.

Thus, each and every bed is a long chain in and of itself, comprised of several hundred generations, and the bed includes the conceptions of them all. But they are not revealed in him in the same way they appeared in his ancestors, that is in the form of ideas, but only as abstract forms. Therefore, they exist in him in the form of abstract forces, called “tendencies” and “instincts”, without him knowing their reason or why he does whatever he does. Thus, there can never be two people with the same attribute.

The Necessity of Preserving the Freedom of the Individual

Know, that this is the one true possession of the individual, that mustn't be harmed or altered. For finally, these tendencies in the bed will materialize and take the form of conceptions, when that individual grows up and attains a mind of his own. And as a result of the law of evolution that controls that chain and pushes it ever forward. We learn further, that each and every tendency is bound to turn into a sublime concept of immeasurable value.

It turns out that he who eradicates a tendency from an individual and uproots it, causes the loss of that sublime and wondrous concept from the world, destined to materialize at the end of the chain, for that tendency will never again be in any other body but that particular one.

Thus we understand that when a particular tendency takes the form of a concept, it can no longer be distinguished as good or bad. But such distinction can only exist when they are still tendencies or immature concepts, and in no way is any of that recognized when they take the shape of true concepts.

From the above we learn what a terrible wrong inflict those nations that force their reign on minorities, depriving them of freedom, of the ability to live their lives by the tendencies they have inherited from their ancestors. They are regarded as no less than murderers.

Even those who do not believe in religion and purposeful guidance can understand the must of preserving the freedom of the individual, out of watching the systems of nature. For we can see that every nation that ever fell, did not come to it but due to the oppression of minorities and individuals, which had therefore rebelled against it and ruined it. It is therefore clear to all that peace cannot exist in the world if we do not take into consideration the freedom of the individual. Without it, peace can never be, and ruin shall prevail.

Thus we have clearly defined the essence of the individual with utmost accuracy, after the deduction of all that he takes from the general public. But we now face the question - where, at last, is the individual himself? For all that we've said thus far, is taken as the property of the individual, inherited from his ancestors. But where is the individual himself? Where is he who is the heir, who demands that we guard his property?

But from all that has been said thus far, we still haven't found the point of 'self' in man, which will place him before our eyes as an independent unit. But finally, what do I need to do with the first factor, which is a long chain, comprised of thousands of people, one after the other, from generation to generation, that set the image of the individual as an heir? And what do I need to do with the other three factors, comprised of thousands of people, standing one against the other in one generation? The bottom line is that each individual is but a public machine, waiting to be used by the public, as it sees fit. Meaning that he has become subject to two types of public:

- A. From the perspective of the first factor, he's become subject to a large public from past generations, standing one after the other.
- B. From the perspective of the other three factors, he has become subject to his contemporary public.

And that is indeed a universal question. For that reason there are many who oppose the above natural method, although they recognize its validity. And they take in its place metaphysical methods, or dualism, or transcendentalism, in order to create for themselves a picture of some spiritual object, and how it sits within the body or the soul. And it is that soul, which learns and which operates the body, and that is the essence of man, his 'self'.

And perhaps these interpretations could ease one's mind, but the problem is that they have no scientific solution as to how is it possible for a spiritual object, to have any kind of contact with physical atoms, to bring them to any kind of motion. And their wisdom did not help them find a bridge on which to cross that wide and deep crevice that spreads between the spiritual entity and the corporeal atom. Thus, science has gained nothing from all these metaphysical methods.

The Will to Receive - Existence from Absence

We need only the wisdom of Kabbalah in order to move a step forward here, in a scientific manner. For all the wisdom of the worlds is included in the wisdom of Kabbalah. We learn, in the matter of "the spiritual lights and vessels", that the main novelty from the point of view of creation, that He has created existence from absence, applies to one aspect only, defined as the "will to receive". All other matters in the whole of creation, are definitely not novelty, that they are not existence from absence, but existence from existence. Meaning, that they are directly extracted from His essence, as the light extends from the sun. There too, there is no novelty, since the substance of the sun extends outwardly.

But the will to receive, however, is complete novelty. Meaning, that prior to creation, such a thing did not exist in reality, because He has no aspect of will to receive, since He precedes everything, so from whom would He receive? Therefore, that will to receive, that He extracted as existence from absence is complete novelty. But all the rest hasn't any novelty to it, which can be called "creation". Thus, all the vessels and the bodies, both from spiritual worlds and from physical ones, are deemed material or spiritual substance, of a nature to "want to receive".

Two Forces in the Will to Receive: the Attracting Force and the Rejecting Force

And you need to see further, that in that force, named the “will to receive”, we distinguish two forces:

- A. The rejecting force.
- B. The attracting force.

The reason is, that each body, or vessel, defined by the will to receive, is indeed limited, meaning the quality that it'll receive and the quantity. Therefore, all the quantity and quality that are out of bounds for it, appear to be going against its nature, and therefore it rejects them. Thus, that “will to receive”, although it is deemed an attracting force, it is compelled to become a rejecting force as well.

One Law for all the Worlds

Although the wisdom of Kabbalah mentions nothing of our corporeal world, there is still only one law for all the worlds. Therefore all the corporeal entities of our world, meaning everything within that space, be it still, vegetative, animate, a spiritual or a corporeal object, if we want to distinguish the unique, self aspect of each of them, how they differentiate from one another, even in the smallest of particles, it amounts to no more than a “will to receive”, which is all its particular form, from the point of view of the renewed creation, limiting it in both quantity and quality, that induce the presence of the attracting force and the rejecting force.

But anything other than those two forces within it is deemed the bounty from His essence. And that bounty is equal for all creatures as there is no novelty ascribed to it by creation, being extended existence from existence. And it cannot be ascribed to any particular unit, but only to things that are common to all parts of creation, small or large. That each of them receives from that bounty according to its will to receive, and under that limitation each individual and unit is defined.

Thus I have evidently - and scientifically - proven the self (ego) of every individual in a scientific, completely criticism proof from all sides, even with regard to the system of the fanatic automatic materialists. From now on we do not need those crippled methods, dipped in metaphysics.

And of course it makes no difference, whether this force, being the will to receive, is a result and a fruit of the structure that had materialized through chemistry, or that the structure is a result and a fruit of that force. For we know that the main thing is that only this force, imprinted in every being and atom of the “will to receive” within its boundaries, is deemed the unit, where it is separated from its environment. And that holds true both for a single atom or for a group of atoms, called a body.

And all other aspects, where there is some surplus of that force, are not related in any way to that particle or that group of particles, either from the aspect of its selfness, or just in general, which is the bounty, extended to them from God, where it is a common matter for all parts of creation, without distinguishing specific created bodies.

Now we shall understand the matter of the “freedom of the individual” according to the definition of the first factor, which we called the “bed”, where all previous generations, which are the ancestors of that individual, have imprinted their nature. And as we've clarified, that the meaning of the word individual is but the boundaries of the “will to receive”, imprinted in its group of particles.

Thus you see that all the tendencies he has inherited from his ancestors are indeed no more than boundaries of his “will to receive”, either from the side of the attracting force in him, or from the side of the rejecting force in him, that appear before us as tendencies for stinginess or generosity, a tendency to mingle or to stay secluded and so on.

Because of that, they really are his self (ego), fighting for its existence. Thus, if we eradicate even a single tendency from that particular individual, we are considered to be cutting off an actual organ from his bones. And it is also regarded as a genuine loss for all creation, because there is no other like it, nor will there ever be like it in the entire world.

After we have thoroughly clarified the just right of the individual according to natural law, let us turn and see just how practical it is, without compromising the theory of ethics and statesmanship. And most important: how is this right applied by our holy Torah.

Take After the Collective

Our scriptures say: “Take after the collective”. That means that wherever there is a dispute between the collective and the individual, we are obliged to rule according to the will of the collective. Thus you see that the collective has a right to expropriate the freedom of the individual.

But we are faced with a different question here, even graver than the first, for this law seemingly regresses humanity instead of promoting it. Because while most of mankind is as yet undeveloped, and the developed are always a small minority, it turns out that if you follow the will of the collective, which are the undeveloped and the ones of hasty heart, the opinions and desires of the wise and the developed, which are always the minority, are never taken into account. Thus you seal off humanity’s fate to regression, for it will not be able to make even a single step forward.

Although, as it says in the “Essay of Peace” about the “obligation to caution in the laws of nature”, that since we are ordered by providence to live a social life, we have become obligated to observe all the rules that deal with sustaining the society. And if we underestimate their importance, even to a small extent, nature will take its revenge in us, regardless of whether or not we understand the reason in the law.

And we can see that there is no other arrangement to live by within our society, but that of “Take after the collective”, which sets every dispute and tribulation in society in order. Thus, this law is the only instrument which gives society a right to exist. Therefore it is considered one of the natural precepts of providence, and we must accept it and guard it meticulously, regardless of our understanding.

It is like all other precepts (Mitzvot) in the Torah, that are all the laws of nature and His providence, which come to us from above downward. And I have already described how all the stubbornness that we detect in the conduct of nature in this world, is only because they are extended and taken from laws and conducts of upper, spiritual worlds.

Hence, you can also understand that the Mitzvot in the Torah are no more than laws and conducts, set in upper worlds, which are the roots for all of the conducts of nature in this world, as two drops in a pond. Thus we have proven that the law of “Take after the collective” is the law of providence and nature.

A Path of Torah and a Path of Pain

Yet the question about the regression that had come up as a result of that law is as yet not settled. And that is indeed our concern to find ways to mend that. But

providence, in and of itself, does not lack because of that, for it has already thoroughly enveloped humankind in two ways: the “Path of Torah”, and the “Path of Pain”. In such a way, that it is a, guarantee of humanity’s continuous development and progress toward the end, without any reservations. Indeed, obeying this law is a natural, necessary commitment.

The Right of the Collective to Expropriate the Freedom of the Individual

And we must ask further: for things are justified when matters revolve around issues that are between two people. That then we can accept the law of “Taking after the collective”, through the obligation of providence, which instructs us to look after the wellbeing and happiness of my friends. But the law of “Taking after the collective” is held valid by the Torah in matters that regard disputes between man and God, although these matters seem to be irrelevant to the existence of society.

Therefore, the question still stands: how can we justify that law, which obligates us to accept the opinion of the majority, which is, as we’ve said, undeveloped, and to reject and annul the opinion of the developed, which are always a small minority?

But as we’ve shown, the Mitzvot and the Torah, were not given but in order to purify Israel, meaning to develop in us the sense of recognition of evil, imprinted in us at birth, which is generally defined as our self-love. And to come to the pure good, defined as the “Love of the Fellow Man”, which is the one passage to the love of God.

And the precepts between man and God fall into that criteria, which are tools of virtue that detach man from self-love, which is harmful for society. It is thus obvious that the topics of dispute regarding the precepts between man and God, relate to the problem of society’s right to exist. Thus, they too fall into the framework of “Take after the collective”.

Now we can understand the conduct of discriminating between Halacha (Jewish law) and Aggada (A type of Jewish literature). Because only in Halacha is there the law of “individual and collective, Halacha as a collective”. And it is not so in Aggada, because matters of Aggada stand above matters that concern the existence of society. For they speak exactly of the matter of the conduct of people in matters concerning man and God, in that same part where the existence and physical happiness of society has no consequence.

Thus, there is no justification for the collective to annul the opinion of the individual and “every man did that which was right in his own eyes”. Whereas regarding the Halachot (Jewish ritual - laws dealing with a specific subject) that deal with observing the precepts of the Torah, they all fall under the supervision of society, since there cannot be any order, but through the law of “Taking after the collective”.

Society should follow the Law of “Take after the Collective”

Now we have come to a clear understanding of the sentence of the freedom of the individual. For indeed there is a question of where did the collective take the right to expropriate the freedom of the individual and deny him of the most precious thing in life - freedom. Seemingly, there is no more than brute force here.

But as we’ve clearly explained above, it is a natural law and the decree of providence, that because providence compels us all to conduct social life, it is obvious that each and every person is obligated to secure the existence and well-being of society. And that cannot exist but through imposing the conduct of “Taking after the Collective”, and ignoring the opinion of the individual.

Thus you see that this is the origin of every right and justification that the collective has to expropriate the freedom of the individual, against his will, and to

place him under its authority. Therefore it is understood that with regard to all those matters that do not concern the existence of the material life of the society, there is no justification for the collective to rob and abuse the freedom of the individual in any way. And if they do, they are deemed robbers and thieves who prefer brute force to any right and justice in the world, because here the obligation of the individual to obey the will of the collective does not apply.

In Spirituality “Take after the Individual”

It turns out that as far as spiritual life is concerned, there is no natural obligation on the individual to abide by the society in any way. On the contrary, here applies a natural law over the collective, to subdue itself to the authority of the individual. And it is clarified in the Article of Peace, that there are two ways in which providence has enveloped and surrounded us, in order to bring us to the end. And they are:

- A. A Path of Pain, which imposes that development upon us, regardless of our opinion.
- B. A Path of Torah, which develops us consciously, without any agonizing or coercion.

And since the higher developed in the generation is definitely the individual, it turns out that when common people want to relieve themselves of the terrible agony, and take upon themselves conscious development, which is the Path of Torah, they have no choice but to subdue themselves and their physical freedom to the discipline of the individual, and obey the orders and remedies that he will offer them.

Thus you see that in spiritual matters the authority of the collective is overturned, and the law of “Taking after the (developed) Individual” is applied. For it is plain to see, that the developed and the educated in every society, are always a small minority. It therefore turns out that the success and spiritual well-being of society is bottled and sealed in the hands of few.

Therefore the collective is obliged to watch meticulously the opinion of the few, that they will not perish from the world. For they must know for sure, with absolute certainty, that the more developed and true opinions, are never in the hands of the collective in authority, but rather in the hands of the weakest, that is to say, in the hands of an indistinguishable minority. For every wisdom and everything that is precious, comes into the world in small quantities. Therefore we are cautioned to preserve the opinions of each individual, because of the collective’s inability to tell wrong from right amongst them.

Criticism Brings Success, the Lack of it Causes Degeneration

We must further add, that reality offers to our eyes extreme contradiction between the physical matters, in the concepts and ideas regarding the above subject. For the matter of social unity, which can be a source of every joy and success, is practiced only between bodies, and bodily matters in people, and the separation between them is the source of every calamity and misfortune.

But with matters of concepts and ideas, it is the complete opposite. That is to say, that because unity and lack of criticism is deemed the source of all failure and the greatest obstacle to every progress and didactic fertilization. For drawing the right conclusions depends mainly on the multiplicity of disagreements and separation, between opinions. The more contradictions there are between opinions and the more

criticism there is, the more the knowledge and wisdom increase and matters become more suitable for examination.

The degeneration and failure of intelligence stem only from the lack of criticism and disagreement. For it is plain to see that every basis for physical success is the measure of the unity of society, and the basis for the success of intelligence and knowledge, is the separation and disagreement among them.

It therefore turns out, that when mankind succeeds in the matter of success of the bodies, meaning by bringing them to the degree of complete love for the fellow man, all the bodies in the world will unite into a single body and a single heart. And only then will all the happiness intended for humanity will be revealed in all its glory. But against that, we must be careful not to bring the opinions of people too close together, for that might terminate the disagreement and criticism from among the wise, for the love of the body bring with it the love of the mind. And should the criticism and disagreement vanish from the world, all progress in concepts and ideas will cease too, and the source of knowledge in the world will dry out.

That is the proof of the obligation to caution with the freedom of the individual regarding concepts and ideas. For the whole development of the wisdom is based on that freedom of the individual. Thus, we are cautioned to preserve it very carefully, in a way that each and every form within us, which we call the “individual”, that is the particular force of a single person, generally named the “will to receive”.

Ancestral Heritage

All the details that this will to receive includes, which we have defined as the “bed”, or the First Factor, whose meaning includes all the tendencies and customs, inherited from his ancestors, that we picture as a long chain, consisting of thousands of people who once were alive, and they stand one on top of the other, that each of them is an essential drop of his ancestors. And that drop, that each of us receives, brings with it the spiritual possessions of his ancestors, into his “medulla oblongata” (the elongated brain), also called subconscious. Thus the individual before us takes, in his subconscious, all the thousands of spiritual inheritances from all the individuals represented in that chain, which are his ancestors.

Thus, just as the faces of each and every person differ, so do their opinions. There are no two people on earth whose opinions are identical, because each and every person has a great and sublime possession, which he inherits from his ancestors, which others do not even have a shred of.

Therefore, all those possessions are deemed the individual’s property, and society is cautioned to preserve its flavor and spirit, and prevent the environment from blurring it, and preserve the integrity of the inheritance of each individual. Then, the contradiction and difference between them will remain forever, so as to secure the criticism and progress of the wisdom for all eternity, which is humanity’s advantage and its true eternal desires.

And after we have come to a certain amount of recognition in man’s selfness, which we have determined as a force and a “will to receive”, being the essential point of the bare being, we have also made very clear, with all its boundaries, the measurement of the original possession of each body, which we have defined as “ancestral heritage”. And the meaning of it is that all the power of the tendencies and the attributes that have come into his “bed” through inheritance, which is the first substance of every man, that is the preliminary drop of semen of his forefathers. Now we shall clarify the two aspects of the will to receive.

Two Aspects: A) Potential Force B) Actual Force

To begin with, we must understand that this selfness, we have defined as the “will to receive”, although it is the very essence of man, it cannot exist in reality even for a second.

For that is what we call a Potential Force, meaning before it has become actual, it only exists in our thought, meaning that only the thought can define it.

But in fact, there cannot be any real force in the world that is dormant and inactive. The force only exists in the world when it is revealed in action. By the same token, you cannot say about an infant that it has great strength, when it cannot lift even the lightest weight, but you can say that you see in that infant that when it grows up, it will have great strength.

However, we do say that that strength we find in man when he is grown up was present in his organs and his body even when he was an infant, but the strength had been concealed, and was not apparent.

It is true that in our minds we could determine (the future strength) so, because the mind asserts so. However, in the infant’s actual body, there certainly isn’t any strength, since no strength is revealed in its actions.

And so it is with appetite - it will not appear in the reality of a man’s body, when the organs cannot eat, meaning when he is satiated. But, even when one is satiated, there is the force of appetite, although it is concealed within the body. After some time, when the food had been digested, it reappears and turns from a potential force to an actual force.

However, such a sentence, of determining a potential force, that has not yet been revealed, belongs to the process of educated thought. But it does not exist in reality, because when satiated, we feel certain that the force of appetite is gone and if you search for it, you will find it nowhere.

It turns out that we cannot display a potential force as a subject that exists on its own, but only as a predicate. That is to say, when an action takes place in reality, at that time the force is revealed within the action.

And although by way of deduction, we necessarily find here two things - a subject and a predicate, that is a potential force and an actual force, that the appetite is the subject and imagined picture of the dish - which is the predicate and the action. In reality, however, they come as one. And it will never occur that a person will feel an appetite without picturing the dish he wants to eat, in a way that these are two halves of the same thing. The force of the appetite must be dressed in that picture. We call that action “desire”, meaning the force of appetite revealed in the action of the imagination.

And so it is with our topic - the general will to receive, which is the very essence of man. It reveals and exists only through dressing in the shapes of objects that are likely to be received. For then it exists as the subject, and in no other way. We call that action Life, meaning the Livelihood of Man, which means that the force of the Will to Receive dresses and acts within the desired objects. And that measurement of revelation is the measurement of its life, as we’ve explained in the act we call Desire.

Two Creations: A) Man B) A Living Soul

From the above we can clearly understand the verse: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living (*Chayah*) soul (*Nefesh*)” (Genesis 2, 7). For here we find two creations:

A) Man by himself,

B) The living soul by itself.

And the verse says that when man was first created, as dust of the ground, that is a collection of particles in which resides the essence of man, meaning his “will to receive”. That will to receive is present, as we’ve clarified, in every particle of reality, of which emanated the four types: still, vegetative, animate and speaking. In that aspect man has no edge over any other part of creation, as the verse says: “dust of the ground”.

But we have seen that this force, called the Will to Receive, cannot exist without dressing and acting in a desired object, an action called Life. And according to that we find that before man has arrived at the human forms of reception of pleasure, which differ from those of other animals, he is deemed a lifeless, dead person. That is because his will to receive has no place in which to dress and expose his actions, which are the manifestation of life.

And it says: “and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”, which is the general form of reception that is suitable for man. The words “breath of” in Hebrew take the meaning of ‘value’, and the origin of the word ‘breath’ is understood from the verse: “The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life” (Job 33, 4). The word soul (*Neshama*) has the same syntax structure as the words ‘missing’ (*Nifkad*), accused (*Ne’esham*) and so on.

And the meaning of the words - “and breathed into his nostrils” is that he inserted into himself a soul (*Neshama*) and an appreciation of life, which is the sum total of the forms that are worthy of reception into his Will to Receive. Then, that force, the will to receive, which was wrapped in his particles has found a place to dress in a shape and act, meaning in those forms of reception that he attained from the Lord, and that action is called Life, as we’ve said.

And the verse ends: “and man became a living soul”. That is to say that since the will to receive has begun to act by the measures of those forms of reception, life had instantly been revealed in it and it “became a living soul”. However, prior to the attainment of those forms of reception, although the force of the Will to Receive had been imprinted in him, it is still regarded a lifeless body, because there is no place for the action to come to be.

And as we’ve seen above, although the essence of man is only the Will to Receive, it is still taken as half of a whole, because it must be dressed in a reality that comes its way. For that reason, the will to receive and the image of its possession are actually one and the same, for otherwise it would not have the right to exist even for a moment.

Therefore, when the machine of the body is at its peak, that is until his middle-age, his “ego” stands upright in all the height that’s been imprinted in him at birth. Because of that he feels in himself a large amount of the will to receive, meaning he wants to attain wealth and honor and anything that comes by his way. That is because of the perfection of man’s “ego”, which attracts shapes of structures and concepts that it dresses in and sustains itself through them.

But, when half his life is through, begin the days of the descent, which by definition are his dying days. That is because a person does not die in an instant, just as he was brought to life in an instant. Rather his candle, being his “ego”, withers and dies bit by bit, and along with it die the images and the possessions that he wants to receive.

For now he begins to let go of many of the possessions he had dreamed of in his youth, and he lets go of his greatest possessions, according to his progressing years, until in his old days, when the shadow of death sheds over him, a person finds himself

in 'times of no appeal'. That is because his will to receive, which is his "ego" withers and dies and all that is left is a minute spark, hidden from the eye, meaning that is not dressed in any asset. Therefore there is no appeal and hope in those days for any kind of reception.

Thus we have proven that the will to receive, along with the image of the object that is expected to be received, are really one and the same. And their revelation is equal, their stature is equal and so is the length of their days. However, there is a significant distinction here, in the form of yielding at the time of the decline of life. For that yielding is not a result of satiation, but of despair. That is to say that when the "ego" begins to die, during the time of decline, he feels his own weakness and approaching death. Therefore he lets go and gives up on the dreams and hopes of his youth.

Observe carefully the yielding due to satiation, which causes no grief and cannot be called "partial death", but as an operator who is done operating. Indeed the relinquishment caused by despair is full of pain and sorrow, and therefore can be called "partial death".

Freedom from the Angel of Death

And now, after all that we have learned, we find a way to understand the words of our sages in their true meaning when they said: "Carved (*harut*) on the stones" Do not pronounce it "carved" (*harut*), but rather "freedom" (*herut*), for they've been freed from the angel of death. For it has been said - in the articles: The Revelation of Godliness (*Matan Torah*) and The Bond (*Ha'arvut*) - that prior to the reception of the Torah, they have taken it upon themselves to terminate any private property to the extent that is expressed in the words "a Kingdom of Priests" (*Mamlechet Cohanim*), and they have taken upon themselves the purpose of creation, to cleave to Him in equal form, that as He bestows and does not receive, so will they bestow and not receive, which is the last degree of adhesion, expressed in the words Holy Nation, as it says in the end of The Bond.

And I have already brought you to realize that the essence of man, meaning his selfness, defined in the will to receive, is only half, and cannot exist but through its dressing in some image of an asset or a hope for an asset. For only then our matter is complete, and can be called the Essence of Man.

It turns out, that the Sons of Israel, when they attained complete adhesion on that holy occasion, their vessels of reception had been completely emptied of all worldly assets, and were cleaved to Him with equal form. That means that they did not have any desire for possessing anything for themselves, but only to the extent that they could bestow contentment, that their maker would delight in them.

And since their will to receive had dressed in an image of that object, it has dressed and bonded with it to a complete oneness. Therefore certainly they have become free from the angel of death, for death is necessarily an aspect of absence and negation of the existence of a certain object. But only while there is a spark that wants to exist for its own pleasure, can it be said that that spark does not exist but is absent and dead.

Whereas if there is no such spark in man, but all the sparks of his essence are dressed in bestowal of contentment to their maker, then it is neither absent nor dead. For even when the body nullifies, it only nullifies from the aspect of reception for self gratification, in which the will to receive is dressed, and has no right to exist but through it.

However, when he aims for the purpose of creation, and God takes pleasure in him, that His will is done, man's essence then dresses in His contentment and he attains total immortality, as Him. It turns out that now he has attained freedom from the angel of death. As the Midrash says: "Freedom from the angel of death". And in the Mishna: "Carved (*harut*) on the stones" Do not pronounce it "carved" (*harut*), but rather "freedom" (*herut*), for there is no free man, but he who studies the Torah".